Education Experts, Teachers, Engineers (Civil/Electrical), Academicians, Groundsmen and other supporting staff. There has been a continuous endeavour on the part of SAI to bring professionalism in its sports promotion activities. The implementation of various SAI schemes is done by adopting systematic and scientific approach towards sports promotion. More and more sportspersons and other experts are associated from time to time for implementing schemes/programmes of SAI which are implemented by it through its regional centres in collaboration with the State Governments/UTs administration. These schemes/programmes are reviewed periodically in order to make SAI more professional and result-oriented. In addition, foreign coaches/ experts are invited from abroad to provide coaching to our sportspersons. Presently, there are 42 foreign coaches in different disciplines to train the national teams for different disciplines in collaboration with the Indian Olympic Association and the concerned National Sports Federation. Apart from the National Coaches, Foreign Coaches, Sports Scientists/ Experts are also associated with the preparation of the national team and progress thereof reviewed periodically by the Government/Expert Committee and remedial actions taken, if required.

Controversy regarding Arjuna Award

1182. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA': Will the Minister of YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there was any controversy regarding selection of eminent sports persons to be given Arjuna Award;

(b) if so, what were the main objections;

(c) whether any steps have been taken for making this selection transparent; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS (SHRI P. RADHAKRISHNAN): (a) and (b) No, Sir. A well laid down procedure with objective criteria for selection of Arjuna awardees already existed in the Ministry. However, based on representations received

from certain quarters that some deserving cases were not considered for the award, it was decided to make the selection process more transparent and also include more sportspersons in the Selection Committee.

(c) and (d) Reviewing of existing schemes is an ongoing process. Accordingly, the Government has recently revised the scheme for Arjuna Awards for outstanding performance in Sports and Games. The following are the major steps which have been taken in this regard:—

(i) Enlarged Selection Committee with more non-official members.

(ii) Excellence in performance at International level only will be taken into account for selecting the Awardees.

(iii) The sportsperson found positive for use of banned drugs in any laboratory accredited by the International Olympic Committee will not be eligible for Arjuna Award.

(iv) Maximum number of Awardees has been fixed at 15 in any calendar year.

(v) The prize money has been increased from Rs.1.50 lakhs to Rs. 3.00 lakhs.

Promotion of sports

1183. SHRI DRUPAD BORGHAIN: Will the Minister of YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS be pleased to state:

(a) what policy Government have to promote sports in the country;

(b) what type of help is given to sports associations in States; and

(c) how Government help the North Eastern States in general and Manipur in particular?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS (SHRI P. RADHAKRISHNAN): (a) Government has recently